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Evaluating the Performance and Monitoring of MGNREGA in Aizawl District, Mizoram

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Abstract

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is India's largest rights-based rural employment programme, aimed at enhancing livelihood security through guaranteed wage employment and the creation of durable community assets. This study evaluates the performance and monitoring of MGNREGA in Aizawl District, Mizoram, using secondary data retrieved from the Management Information System (MIS) of the Ministry of Rural Development for the financial year 2024–2025. A descriptive and evaluative research design was adopted to examine beneficiary participation, employment generation, work completion, financial utilization, and monitoring mechanisms across the four Rural Development (RD) Blocks of the district. The findings demonstrate high participation among tribal households and women workers, substantial employment generation, and a work completion rate exceeding 93%, indicating effective programme implementation. However, variations among RD Blocks suggest that geographical constraints and administrative capacity continue to influence programme outcomes. The study highlights the importance of strengthening digital monitoring, institutional capacity, and the ongoing transition towards the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM) to enhance the

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effectiveness and sustainability of rural employment programmes in Mizoram.

Key Words: *MGNREGA, Rural Employment, Programme Performance, Monitoring, Rural Development, Mizoram, VB-G RAM.*

Introduction

Rural employment remains a major development challenge in India, particularly in economically vulnerable and geographically remote regions where agriculture is the principal source of livelihood. Seasonal unemployment, underemployment, and income insecurity continue to constrain rural development and perpetuate poverty (Drèze & Sen, 2013). To address these challenges, the Government of India enacted the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, a landmark rights-based legislation guaranteeing up to 100 days of wage employment annually to every rural household willing to undertake unskilled manual work. By establishing employment as a legal entitlement, MGNREGA has become one of India's most significant social protection programmes (Ministry of Rural Development [MoRD], 2023).

Since its implementation, MGNREGA has provided livelihood support to millions of rural households while creating durable community assets such as water conservation structures, irrigation facilities, rural roads, afforestation, and land development works. Studies have shown that the programme improves household income security, reduces seasonal migration, strengthens rural labour markets, and promotes gender equality and social inclusion through increased participation of women and marginalized communities (Drèze & Khera, 2017; Berg et al., 2018; Abraham & Neetha, 2024). It has also contributed to sustainable rural development by supporting natural resource management and rural infrastructure (Aiyar & Samji, 2009; Esteves et al., 2013).

The effectiveness of MGNREGA depends on efficient implementation and robust monitoring systems. To improve transparency and accountability, the Government of India has introduced digital

initiatives such as the Management Information System (MIS), Electronic Fund Management System (e-FMS), National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS), GeoMGNREGA, Aadhaar-Based Payment System (ABPS), and mandatory social audits. Despite these reforms, administrative constraints and geographical challenges continue to affect programme implementation, particularly in remote and hilly regions (Comptroller and Auditor General of India, 2013; Agrawal, 2019; Kumar et al., 2021).

These challenges are particularly relevant in northeastern India, where mountainous terrain and dispersed settlements complicate programme implementation and monitoring (Shrivastava, 2013). Although MGNREGA has become an important source of livelihood security in the region (Sangma, 2016), district-level studies in Mizoram remain limited. Existing research has largely focused on national or state-level analyses, with little attention to comparative performance across Rural Development (RD) Blocks using recent MIS data.

Against this background, the present study evaluates the performance and monitoring of MGNREGA in Aizawl District, Mizoram, using official MIS data for the financial year 2024–2025. The study examines beneficiary participation, employment generation, work completion, financial utilization, and monitoring mechanisms across the four RD Blocks—Aibawk, Darlawn, Tlangnuam, and Thingsulthliah. The findings provide a district-level assessment that contributes to the limited literature on MGNREGA implementation in northeastern India and offers evidence to support policy improvements, particularly as rural employment programmes evolve towards convergence under the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM).

Review of Literature

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), enacted in 2005, is one of the world's largest rights-based social protection programmes, guaranteeing up to 100 days of wage employment annually to rural households willing to undertake unskilled

manual work. Beyond employment generation, the programme seeks to enhance livelihood security, promote social inclusion, and create durable community assets. Since its implementation, MGNREGA has attracted considerable scholarly attention, particularly regarding its contribution to rural employment, poverty reduction, gender empowerment, asset creation, and governance.

MGNREGA and Rural Livelihoods

A substantial body of literature demonstrates that MGNREGA has strengthened rural livelihood security by providing guaranteed wage employment during agricultural lean seasons. Drèze and Khera (2017) describe the programme as one of India's most significant social protection initiatives, while Afridi et al. (2016) highlighted the programme's contribution to strengthening rural livelihoods and improving labour market participation among disadvantaged households. Similarly, Berg et al. (2018) reported that MGNREGA strengthened rural labour markets by increasing agricultural wages and workers' bargaining power. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme served as an important safety net by generating employment for returning migrant workers (Lokhande & Gundimeda, 2021).

Gender Empowerment and Social Inclusion

MGNREGA has made notable contributions to gender equality and social inclusion. Khera and Nayak (2009) found that participation in the programme enhanced women's financial independence and decision-making within households. Likewise, Pankaj and Tankha (2010) observed that employment opportunities within villages encouraged greater female labour force participation. The programme has also expanded livelihood opportunities for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, thereby promoting social inclusion and equitable access to public resources (Abraham & Neetha, 2024; Mallik & Paltasingh, 2025).

Asset Creation and Monitoring

MGNREGA supports sustainable rural development through investments in water conservation, irrigation, afforestation, land development, and rural infrastructure. These assets contribute to agricultural productivity and environmental sustainability (Aiyar & Samji, 2009; Esteves et al., 2013). Effective implementation is supported by monitoring mechanisms such as the Management Information System (MIS), Electronic Fund Management System (e-FMS), National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS), GeoMGNREGA, and mandatory social audits. Although these initiatives have strengthened transparency and accountability, studies continue to report challenges related to delayed wage payments, administrative capacity, and digital implementation, particularly in remote regions (Comptroller and Auditor General of India, 2013; Salian & Leelavathi, 2016; Agrawal, 2019).

MGNREGA in Northeastern India

The implementation of MGNREGA in northeastern India is influenced by mountainous terrain, dispersed settlements, and limited infrastructure. Shrivastava (2013) noted that these geographical conditions complicate programme implementation and monitoring. Nevertheless, Sangma (2016) found that MGNREGA has significantly improved rural employment and community development in Meghalaya. Compared with other regions, however, empirical studies on MGNREGA implementation in Mizoram remain limited despite the state's predominantly tribal population and unique geographical context.

Research Gap

Although extensive research has examined MGNREGA at the national and state levels, district-level evaluations in northeastern India remain scarce. Existing studies rarely compare programme performance

across Rural Development (RD) Blocks using recent Management Information System (MIS) data or simultaneously assess beneficiary participation, employment generation, work completion, financial utilization, and monitoring mechanisms within a single district. Furthermore, the implications of recent digital monitoring reforms have received limited attention in the context of Mizoram.

To address these gaps, the present study evaluates the performance and monitoring of MGNREGA across the four RD Blocks of Aizawl District using official MIS data for the financial year 2024–2025. The study provides a district-level assessment that contributes to the limited literature on MGNREGA implementation in northeastern India and offers evidence-based recommendations for strengthening rural employment programmes, particularly as rural development policy increasingly transitions towards the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM).

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and evaluative research design to assess the performance and monitoring of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in Aizawl District, Mizoram. A descriptive approach was employed to analyze programme performance using quantitative secondary data, while the evaluative component assessed key indicators such as beneficiary participation, employment generation, work completion, financial utilization, and monitoring mechanisms. The study follows a cross-sectional design based on data for the financial year 2024–2025.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Aizawl District, located in the state of Mizoram, North-East India. Aizawl is the administrative capital and one of

the most economically significant districts in the state. The study covers all four Rural Development (RD) Blocks- Aibawk, Darlawn, Tlangnuam, and Thingsulthliah to provide a comprehensive district-level assessment of MGNREGA implementation.

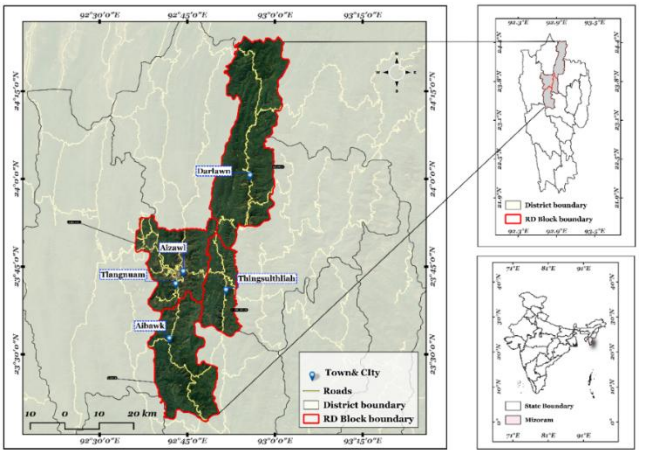

Figure 1 Map of Aizawl District showing the four RD Blocks

Source: Prepared by the author (2026)

Data Sources

The study is based entirely on secondary data obtained from the Management Information System (MIS) of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. Additional information was collected from Ministry reports, MGNREGA operational guidelines, Census publications, government documents, and relevant peer-reviewed literature.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Frequency distributions, percentages, averages, and comparative analysis were employed to evaluate programme performance across the four RD Blocks.

The analysis focuses on—beneficiary participation; employment generation; work completion; financial utilization; monitoring mechanisms.

Comparative analysis was undertaken to identify similarities and differences in programme performance among the RD Blocks. Findings are presented using tables and interpreted in relation to previous empirical studies. The study evaluates MGNREGA performance through five interconnected dimensions:

Figure 2 Analytical Framework for Evaluating the Performance and Monitoring of MGNREGA
Source: Prepared by the author (2026)

Findings

Beneficiary Participation and Inclusiveness

MGNREGA recorded substantial beneficiary participation across the four Rural Development (RD) Blocks of Aizawl District during the financial year 2024–2025. A total of 21,007 job cards were issued, covering 23,572 registered workers, of whom 20,887 were active workers. Scheduled Tribe (ST) beneficiaries constituted 23,210 (98.46%) of the registered workforce, reflecting the predominantly tribal population of Mizoram and demonstrating the programme's effective outreach to its primary target group. Women accounted for 13,597 (57.68%) of the registered workers and 11,792 (56.46%) of the active workforce, substantially exceeding the statutory requirement of one-third participation. This indicates that

MGNREGA has become an important source of wage employment for rural women and contributes significantly to gender inclusion and economic empowerment.

A comparison across the four RD Blocks reveals moderate variations in beneficiary participation. Darlawn recorded the highest number of job cards (6,840) and registered workers (9,189), followed by Tlangnuam, Aibawk, and Thingsulthliah. Similarly, Darlawn accounted for the largest active workforce (6,734), whereas Thingsulthliah reported the lowest participation. These differences are likely associated with variations in rural population size, labour demand, and the scale of programme implementation. Nevertheless, all four RD Blocks exhibited consistently high participation among Scheduled Tribe households and women, demonstrating that MGNREGA has been implemented inclusively and has effectively reached vulnerable rural populations across Aizawl District.

Table 1: Beneficiary Participation under MGNREGA in Aizawl District, 2024–2025

Block	No. of Job Cards Issued	Registered Workers				No of Active Job Cards	Active Workers			
		STs	Others	Total	Women		ST	Other	Total Workers	Women
Aibawk	5077	4990	15	5005	3193	4978	4965	15	4980	4980
Tlangnuam	5460	5591	23	5614	3144	5375	5436	23	5459	5459
Thingsulthliah	3700	3733	31	3764	2301	3700	3684	30	3714	3714
Darlawn	6840	8896	293	9189	4959	6737	6460	274	6734	6734
Total	**21007**	**23210**	**362**	**23572**	**13597**	**20790**	**20545**	**342**	**20887**	**11792**

Source: MGNREGA MIS Portal https://nrega.nic.in/

Employment Generation and Programme Performance

Employment generation remained the primary objective of MGNREGA in Aizawl District during the financial year 2024–2025. The programme provided employment to 21,347 households and 21,394 individuals, generating a total of 2,024,833 person-days of work. On average, each household received 94.85 days of employment, approaching the statutory guarantee of 100 days. The average wage rate was ₹265.97 per

person-day, reflecting compliance with the prescribed wage rates under MGNREGA.

A comparison across the four Rural Development (RD) Blocks indicates variations in programme performance. Darlawn generated the highest employment, providing work to 6,859 households and generating 661,795 person-days, followed by Tlangnuam (530,527 person-days), Aibawk (476,568 person-days), and Thingsulthliah (355,943 person-days). The average number of employment days per household remained consistently high across all blocks, ranging from 94.02 days in Thingsulthliah to 96.49 days in Darlawn, suggesting effective implementation of the employment guarantee provisions throughout the district.

The programme also demonstrated satisfactory implementation efficiency. Of the 3,312 works undertaken during the study period, 2,874 works were completed, while 400 works remained in progress. Darlawn recorded the highest number of completed works (1,143), whereas Thingsulthliah reported the fewest (362). Furthermore, the average cost per person-day varied only marginally across the RD Blocks, ranging from ₹289.62 in Darlawn to ₹303.82 in Thingsulthliah, indicating relatively efficient and consistent utilization of programme resources. Overall, the findings demonstrate that MGNREGA effectively generated rural employment while maintaining uniform wage payments and satisfactory implementation performance across Aizawl District.

Table 2: Employment Generation and Programme Performance under MGNREGA in Aizawl District, 2024–2025

Block	Employment Provided			Average days of employment provided per Households	Average Wage per person/day (In Rs.)	Works		Cost per Person/Day (In Rs.)
	Household	Person	Per days			Comp.	In-prog.	
Aibawk	5132	5132	476568	92.86	266	789	146	292.54
Darlawn	6859	6861	661795	96.49	265.92	1143	108	289.62
Thingsulthliah	3786	3789	355943	94.02	265.99	362	85	338.59
Tlangnuam	5570	5612	530527	95.25	266	848	61	298.42
Total	**21347**	**21394**	**2024833**	**94.85**	**265.97**	**3142**	**400**	**301.22**

Source: MGNREGA MIS Portal https://nrega.nic.in/

Age-wise Employment Pattern

The age distribution of MGNREGA beneficiaries indicates that participation was concentrated among the economically productive population. Individuals aged 31–40 years constituted the largest group of both registered (23,422) and employed (4,463) workers, followed by those aged 41–50 years, with 20,091 registered and 5,434 employed persons. This suggests that MGNREGA primarily supports the core working-age population, who are most actively engaged in rural livelihood activities.

Participation among younger adults aged 18–30 years was comparatively lower, accounting for 2,796 registered and 1,592 employed workers. This may reflect the migration of younger individuals to urban areas for higher education and employment opportunities. In contrast, participation gradually declined among older age groups, particularly those aged 61–80 years and above 80 years, although the programme continued to provide supplementary employment opportunities for elderly rural residents lacking alternative sources of income.

A comparison across the RD Blocks shows that Darlawn recorded the highest number of registered and employed workers across most age categories, followed by Tlangnuam and Aibawk, whereas Thingsulthliah consistently reported the lowest participation. Overall, the age profile demonstrates that MGNREGA effectively targets the district's economically active workforce while also extending livelihood support to vulnerable older populations.

Table 3: Age-wise Distribution of Registered and Employed Persons under MGNREGA in Aizawl District, 2024–2025

Block	Age-wise Registered & Employed Persons											
	18-30		31-40		41-50		51-60		61-80		> 80	
	Reg.	Emp.	Reg.	Emp.	Reg.	Emp.	Reg.	Emp.	Reg.	Emp.	Reg.	Emp.
Aibawk	535	402	5107	1214	5469	1312	2894	888	3216	1040	946	276
Darlawn	1253	537	9049	1507	8964	1615	4867	1144	5268	1629	1454	429
Thingsulthliah	452	314	4002	652	4598	991	2717	826	2543	787	587	219
Tlangnuam	556	339	5264	1090	7060	1516	4152	1177	3893	1245	896	245
Total	**2796**	**1592**	**23422**	**4463**	**26091**	**5434**	**14630**	**4035**	**14920**	**4701**	**3883**	**1169**

Reg. = Registered; Emp. = Employed Source: MGNREGA MIS Portal https://nrega.nic.in/

Work Progress and Completion

The implementation performance of MGNREGA in Aizawl District is reflected in the high rate of work completion during the financial year 2024–2025. A total of 2,554 works were initiated, of which 2,386 (93.42%) were successfully completed, while 168 works remained in progress. The high completion rate indicates effective implementation and timely execution of development activities across the district.

A comparison across the four RD Blocks reveals notable differences in implementation efficiency. Darlawn recorded the highest work completion rate (99.47%), closely followed by Tlangnuam (99.17%), demonstrating strong project management and administrative efficiency. In contrast, Aibawk (82.71%) and Thingsulthliah (81.64%) reported comparatively lower completion rates, accounting for the majority of works that remained incomplete. These variations may be attributed to differences in geographical accessibility, terrain, availability of technical personnel, and local administrative capacity. Nevertheless, the overall district completion rate of more than 93% suggests that MGNREGA has been implemented effectively, although targeted administrative support and closer monitoring in the comparatively weaker RD Blocks could further improve programme performance.

Table 4: Work Progress and Completion Status under MGNREGA in Aizawl District, 2024–2025

Block	No. of Works started	No. of Works Completed	Not Yet Completed	Work Completion Rate
Aibawk	480	397	83	82.71
Darlawn	952	947	5	99.47
Thingsulthliah	403	329	74	81.64
Tlangnuam	719	713	6	99.17
Total	**2554**	**2386**	**168**	**93.42**

Source: MGNREGA MIS Portal https://nrega.nic.in/

Category-wise Development Works

The distribution of MGNREGA works in Aizawl District indicates a strong emphasis on community asset creation and natural resource management during the financial year 2024–2025. Community Individual Assets for Vulnerable Sections accounted for the largest number of works (3,317), followed by Natural Resource Management (3,029) and Rural Infrastructure (2,193). In contrast, Infrastructure for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) constituted only a small proportion of the total works (15), indicating relatively limited investment in this category.

Natural Resource Management activities, including water conservation, land development, afforestation, and irrigation, received substantial financial support, with an expenditure of ₹2,661.58 lakh, highlighting the programme's contribution to environmental conservation and sustainable rural livelihoods. Community Individual Assets recorded the highest expenditure (₹2,967.89 lakh) and the largest number of completed works (1,567), reflecting the programme's focus on improving the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable households. Rural Infrastructure also represented a significant share of programme implementation, with 810 completed works and an expenditure of ₹1,909.00 lakh, contributing to improved rural connectivity and public infrastructure.

Overall, the category-wise distribution of works demonstrates that MGNREGA in Aizawl District extends beyond wage employment by prioritizing productive asset creation, environmental sustainability, and

rural infrastructure development. The continued implementation of ongoing works (4,722) further indicates sustained programme activities and the potential for long-term developmental benefits.

Table 5: Category-wise Distribution of MGNREGA Works and Expenditure in Aizawl District, 2024–2025

Work Category	Total Works (Spillover + New)	New Works	Completed Works	Ongoing Works	Expenditure (₹ Lakhs)
Natural Resource Management (Water conservation, irrigation, afforestation, land development)	3029	173	1443	1586	2661.58
Community / Individual Assets for Vulnerable Sections	3317	207	1567	1750	2967.89
Infrastructure for Self-Help Groups (NRLM)	15	1	12	3	11.98
Rural Infrastructure (roads, sanitation, buildings, disaster works)	2193	83	810	1383	1909.00
Total	**8554**	**464**	**3832**	**4722**	**7550.45**

Source: MGNREGA MIS Portal https://nrega.nic.in/

Financial Performance

The financial performance of MGNREGA in Aizawl District during the financial year 2024–2025 indicates efficient utilization of allocated resources. Against an authorized Electronic Fund Management System (eFMS) allocation of ₹6,468.16 lakh, the programme utilized ₹6,466.19 lakh, leaving a marginal balance of ₹1.97 lakh. This reflects a high level of financial utilization and effective fund management across the district.

Expenditure was primarily directed towards wage payments, with ₹5,682.89 lakh spent on unskilled labour and ₹166.29 lakh on skilled labour, together accounting for the largest share of programme expenditure. Material costs amounted to ₹417.70 lakh, while total administrative expenditure remained relatively low at ₹199.25 lakh, indicating that financial resources were largely utilized for employment generation and programme implementation in accordance with the objectives of MGNREGA.

A comparison across the four RD Blocks shows that Darlawn recorded the highest expenditure (₹1,939.91 lakh), followed by Aibawk (₹1,409.34 lakh), Thingsulthliah (₹1,214.90 lakh), and Tlangnuam (₹1,902.04 lakh). Despite variations in expenditure, all four RD Blocks

maintained minimal fund balances, suggesting efficient financial planning and timely utilization of programme funds. Overall, the findings demonstrate sound financial management and effective utilization of resources to support employment generation and rural development in Aizawl District.

Table 6: Financial Performance of MGNREGA across RD Blocks in Aizawl District, 2024–2025

Block	Authorization of EFMS	Cumulative Expenditure						Total	Balance
		Actual Expense			Adm. Expense				
		Unskilled	Skilled	Material	Rec. Exp.	Non-Rec. Exp.	Total Adm. Exp.		
Aibawk	1408.78	1267.39	50.68	49.2	36.47	5.59	42.06	1409.34	-0.55
Darlawn	1944.2	1761.5	35.84	66.76	64.89	10.93	75.82	1939.91	4.29
Thingsulthliah	1211.7	947.41	33.34	196.18	32.94	5.03	37.97	1214.9	-3.2
Tlangnuam	1903.48	1706.58	46.43	105.63	43.4	0	43.4	1902.04	1.44
Total	**6468.16**	**5682.89**	**166.29**	**417.7**	**177.7**	**21.55**	**199.25**	**6466.19**	**1.97**

Source: MGNREGA MIS Portal https://nrega.nic.in/

Monitoring and Social Audit

Effective monitoring and social audits are essential for ensuring transparency, accountability, and community participation in the implementation of MGNREGA. The findings show that all 71 Gram Panchayats (GPs) in Aizawl District were included in the annual social audit plan for the financial year 2024–2025. Of these, 70 GPs were scheduled for audit during the first cycle and one GP during the second cycle, demonstrating systematic planning of the audit process.

The audit programme achieved 100% coverage, with all 71 Gram Panchayats successfully audited during the financial year. Among them, 69 GPs were audited once, while two GPs underwent a second audit, indicating additional monitoring where necessary. At the block level, all four RD Blocks—Aibawk, Darlawn, Thingsulthliah, and Tlangnuam achieved complete audit coverage, reflecting effective compliance with statutory social audit requirements.

The findings suggest that MGNREGA in Aizawl District has established a robust monitoring framework through comprehensive social audits. However, to further strengthen programme transparency and accountability, social audits should be complemented by digital monitoring tools such as the Management Information System (MIS), National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS), GeoMGNREGA, and Aadhaar-Based Payment System (ABPS). The integration of community-based monitoring with technology-enabled systems can improve programme oversight, particularly in geographically remote and difficult-to-access areas of Mizoram.

Table 7: Social Audit Coverage of Gram Panchayats under MGNREGA in Aizawl District, 2024–2025

Block	Total No. of GPs	Planned GPs			Audited GPs			
		GPs planned in FY	GPs planned in First Cycle	GPs planned in Second Cycle	GPs audited in FY	Percentage of GPs audited once in FY	Total number of GPs audited once in FY	Total number of GPs audited twice in FY
Aibawk	20	20	20	0	20	100.00%	20	0
Darlawn	28	28	28	0	28	100.00%	28	0
Thingsulthliah	10	10	10	0	10	100.00%	10	0
Tlangnuam	13	13	12	1	13	100.00%	11	2
Total	**71**	**71**	**70**	**1**	**71**	**100.00%**	**69**	**2**

Source: MGNREGA MIS Portal https://nrega.nic.in/

Discussion

The present study evaluated the performance and monitoring of MGNREGA in Aizawl District, Mizoram, using official Management Information System (MIS) data for the financial year 2024–2025. Overall, the findings indicate that MGNREGA has been implemented effectively across the district, achieving high beneficiary participation, substantial employment generation, efficient financial utilization, and robust monitoring through social audits. However, differences in performance among the four Rural Development (RD) Blocks suggest that local geographical and administrative factors continue to influence programme

outcomes. These findings support previous research which identifies MGNREGA as a significant instrument for promoting rural livelihoods, social inclusion, and sustainable rural development (Drèze & Khera, 2017; Berg et al., 2018).

One of the most significant findings of this study is the high participation of Scheduled Tribe (ST) households and women workers. Almost all registered beneficiaries belonged to the ST community, reflecting the demographic characteristics of Mizoram and indicating that the programme has effectively reached its intended target population. Women's participation exceeded the statutory requirement of one-third, accounting for more than half of both registered and active workers. This finding is consistent with earlier studies by Khera and Nayak (2009) and Pankaj and Tankha (2010), which reported that MGNREGA has enhanced women's economic participation and strengthened their role in household decision-making. In the context of Mizoram, where women traditionally participate actively in agricultural and community activities, the programme further reinforces gender-inclusive rural development.

The study also demonstrates that MGNREGA continues to play a vital role in livelihood security through employment generation. More than two million person-days of employment were generated, while households received an average of nearly ninety-five days of work, approaching the statutory guarantee of one hundred days. These findings corroborate those of Drèze and Khera (2017) and Lokhande and Gundimeda (2021), who observed that MGNREGA functions as an effective social safety net by reducing seasonal unemployment and providing income security during periods of economic uncertainty. In a geographically remote state such as Mizoram, where alternative employment opportunities remain limited, the programme significantly contributes to reducing livelihood vulnerability.

The comparative analysis of the four RD Blocks reveals noticeable variations in programme performance. Darlawn consistently outperformed the other blocks in beneficiary participation, employment generation, work

completion, and financial utilization, whereas Aibawk and Thingsulthliah recorded comparatively lower completion rates despite satisfactory beneficiary coverage. These variations are unlikely to reflect weaknesses in programme design; rather, they highlight the influence of geographical accessibility, terrain, administrative capacity, and local implementation practices. Similar observations have been reported by Shrivastava (2013), who argued that the mountainous terrain and dispersed settlements of northeastern India increase implementation costs and complicate programme execution. These findings underscore the importance of decentralized planning and block-specific implementation strategies rather than adopting a uniform administrative approach.

Another notable finding is the programme's emphasis on natural resource management and community asset creation. A substantial proportion of works undertaken involved water conservation, afforestation, land development, and infrastructure development for vulnerable households. These investments extend the benefits of MGNREGA beyond short-term wage employment by contributing to agricultural productivity, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience. This finding supports the observations of Aiyar and Samji (2009) and Esteves et al. (2013), who argued that MGNREGA contributes to long-term rural development through productive asset creation and improved natural resource management.

The financial analysis further indicates efficient utilization of programme resources. Almost the entire authorized allocation was utilized during the financial year, with wage payments accounting for the largest share of expenditure and only minimal unspent balances across the RD Blocks. Such expenditure patterns demonstrate adherence to the labour-intensive objectives of MGNREGA while maintaining prudent financial management. Similar findings have been reported in previous evaluations, which identify effective financial utilization as a key determinant of

successful programme implementation (Ministry of Rural Development, 2023).

Monitoring and accountability mechanisms also emerged as important strengths of programme implementation in Aizawl District. The achievement of 100% social audit coverage across all Gram Panchayats reflects strong institutional compliance with statutory monitoring requirements. Nevertheless, social audits alone cannot ensure effective programme governance. The integration of community-based monitoring with digital platforms such as the Management Information System (MIS), National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS), GeoMGNREGA, Aadhaar-Based Payment System (ABPS), and Electronic Fund Management System (e-FMS) can further strengthen transparency, improve real-time monitoring, and minimize implementation delays. These observations are consistent with the recommendations of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (2013) and the Ministry of Rural Development (2023), which emphasize technology-enabled governance as an important mechanism for improving programme efficiency.

The findings also have important policy relevance in light of the Government of India's evolving rural development strategy under the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM). While MGNREGA has traditionally focused on wage employment and asset creation, the emerging policy framework seeks greater convergence between employment generation, livelihood promotion, skill development, and rural entrepreneurship. The strong performance of MGNREGA in Aizawl District provides a solid foundation for this transition. Greater convergence with programmes such as the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, and watershed development initiatives could enhance the sustainability of rural livelihoods and maximize the developmental impact of public investments.

Overall, the study demonstrates that MGNREGA has made a significant contribution to livelihood security, social inclusion, and rural development in Aizawl District. At the same time, the observed inter-block variations highlight the need for stronger institutional capacity, context-specific implementation strategies, and continued investment in digital monitoring systems. These measures will be essential to ensuring that the transition towards the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM) builds upon the achievements of MGNREGA while promoting more resilient, productive, and sustainable rural livelihoods.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

The findings suggest several measures to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of MGNREGA in Aizawl District and other rural areas of Mizoram. Although the programme has achieved high levels of beneficiary participation, employment generation, and work completion, variations among the four Rural Development (RD) Blocks indicate the need for targeted administrative interventions.

First, strengthening the institutional capacity of RD Blocks through adequate staffing, regular training, and improved coordination among implementing agencies would enhance programme planning, execution, and supervision, particularly in geographically remote areas.

Second, monitoring and accountability should be reinforced by integrating social audits with digital governance tools such as the Management Information System (MIS), National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS), GeoMGNREGA, and the Electronic Fund Management System (e-FMS) to improve transparency and timely monitoring.

Third, future investments should prioritise durable and climate-resilient assets, including water conservation, watershed development, afforestation, land improvement, and rural infrastructure, to strengthen long-term livelihood security and environmental sustainability.

Finally, the transition towards the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM) provides an opportunity to strengthen convergence between MGNREGA and programmes such as the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), agriculture, horticulture, and watershed development. Such convergence can promote sustainable livelihoods, improve asset quality, and support long-term rural development. Overall, strengthening institutional capacity, monitoring systems, and programme convergence will enhance the effectiveness of rural employment initiatives and contribute to inclusive and sustainable development in Mizoram.

Conclusion

The present study evaluated the performance and monitoring of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in Aizawl District, Mizoram, using official Management Information System (MIS) data for the financial year 2024–2025. The findings demonstrate that MGNREGA has been effectively implemented across the district, achieving high participation among Scheduled Tribe households and women, substantial employment generation, efficient financial utilization, and a work completion rate exceeding 93%. These outcomes highlight the programme's significant contribution to livelihood security, social inclusion, and sustainable rural development.

Despite its overall success, variations in performance across the four Rural Development (RD) Blocks indicate that geographical constraints, administrative capacity, and local implementation practices continue to influence programme effectiveness. The study contributes to the limited district-level literature on MGNREGA implementation in Mizoram by providing a comparative assessment using recent administrative data. As rural employment policy gradually converges with the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM), the findings provide useful evidence for strengthening programme implementation and promoting sustainable livelihoods. Future research

should incorporate primary data and longitudinal analyses to better understand beneficiaries' experiences and assess the long-term socio-economic and environmental impacts of rural employment programmes.

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